Introduction and Context

Center for Water and Sanitation (CWAS) and **Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)** presented a governance framework to strengthen urban WASH **Performance Assessment System (PAS)** at the Stockholm **World Water Week 2021.** The presentation was made by Arwa Bharmal, Program Lead from CWAS, CRDF, CEPT University and Panchali Saikia, Programme Officer, Water and Sanitation from SIWI. Following this a panel discussion was held. The panel included eminent experts from across the globe.

PAS Governance framework was developed with a set of water and sanitation governance indicators. This was to strengthen the existing PAS framework that monitors provision of water and sanitation services by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in India. The PAS framework uses themes of Access and Coverage, Service levels and Quality, Financial Sustainability, Efficiency in Service Operations and Equity.

The WASH Governance Framework that was developed covers six themes: i) polices and planning, ii) adequate, inclusive and smart administration, iii) adequacy, efficiency and equity in financing, iv) citizen and community outreach, v) climate and disaster resilience, and vi) accountability and monitoring. It assesses city level performance on both governance and service outcomes. Its use will enable city governments to improve governance for both last mile connectivity especially for the most vulnerable groups, as well as improve efficiency and effectiveness of services. It will inform sector stakeholders to make better decisions, for contributing to SDG 6 of water and sanitation for all.

The panel discussion highlighted some good practices and views on how urban WASH service performance can be improved through improved financing, administration, contingency planning and preparedness, community outreach activities, monitoring systems, and strategies. Strengthening local governments on these aspects will help strengthen capacity to ensure that services are in place, are inclusive and equitable, and are sustained over time. It will also help cities to strengthen capacity to address the impact of climate hazards (floods, droughts) and respond to measures for addressing infectious disease outbreaks sch as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Panellists and Attendees

Moderator

Dinesh Mehta
Professor Emeritus
Executive Director

CWAS, CEPT University,
India.(Moderator)

Panellists

Roshan Shreshtha
Deputy Director WASH

Bill and Melinda Gates
Foundation, USA

Meera Mehta
Professor Emeritus
Executive Director
CWAS, CEPT University,
India.

Vida Duti
Country Director

IRC, Ghana.

Norio Saito
Director, South Asia Urban
Development and Water
Division, Manila
Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Robert Gakubia
Ex-Director, Water Services
Regulatory Board (Wasreb)

Kenya.

Alejandro Jiménez
WASH Programme Director

SIWI, Sweden.

Presentation

Arwa Bharmal
Program Lead

CWAS, CEPT University,
India.

Panchali Saikia
Programme Officer, Water
and Sanitation

SIWI, Sweden.

More than 180 participants from
various national and international
organizations across the globe, joined
the webinar.

Participation from:
- Government agencies
- Development agencies
- Non-profits
- Research organizations
- Academicians
- Students

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Presentation on governance framework to strengthen urban WASH Performance Assessment System

The **WASH Governance Hub** is a collaboration amongst **CWAS, SIWI and NIUA.** As a part of this Hub, CWAS in partnership with SIWI has developed an **urban WASH Governance Framework.**

The **PAS framework by CWAS** is one of the largest open access time series database for urban water and sanitation. It works with all three tiers of Governments to support policies and implementation.

The **Governance Framework – CWAS-SIWI** provides city governments with a tool to assess and support decision-making on inclusive urban governance planning and programming.
Preliminary results were developed using information from the PAS portal as well as other data available in the public domain.

Adding governance dimension to the CWAS's PAS framework

Policies, Planning and Implementation
- Pro-poor policies for service delivery
- Long-term policies and plans for WASH service provision
- Use of capital receipts

Adequate, Inclusive & Smart Administration
- Staff availability
- Gender Balance
- Digital platforms

Adequacy, Equity and Efficiency in Financing
- Adequate budget for universal coverage
- Adequate budget for O&M expenditure
- Cost recovery
- Collection efficiency
- Equitable service pricing

Citizen and Community Outreach
- Effectiveness of consumer grievance redressal mechanisms
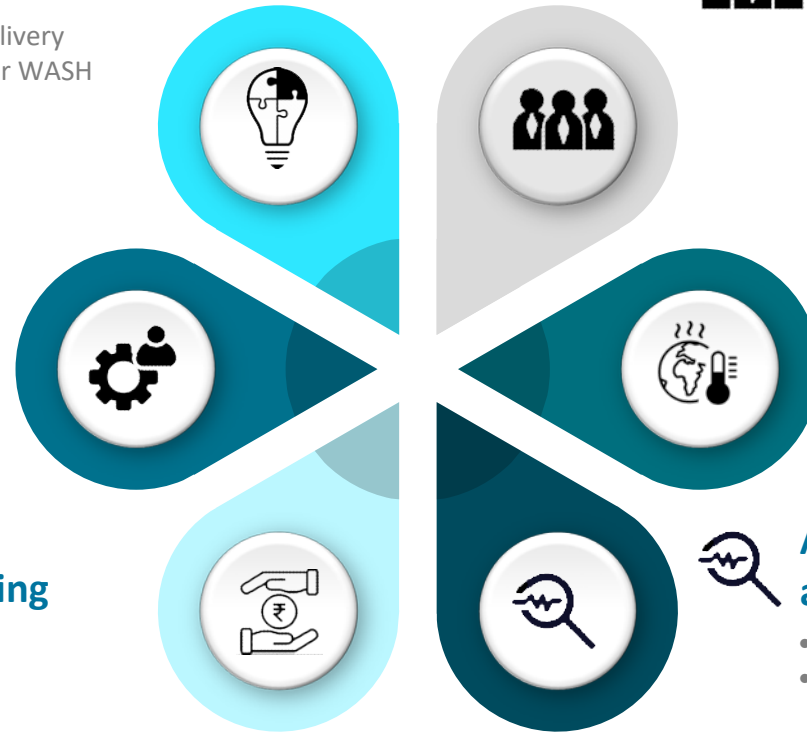- ULB Website
- Citizens Forums

Climate and Disaster Resilience
- Water resource management
- Disaster Management

Accountability and Monitoring
- Audits of municipal accounts
- Regular monitoring & reporting on service delivery
- Reliability of reported monitoring
- Availability and use of data management systems

Reflections from Panel Discussion

Governance system link to PAS WASH service system.

Roshan Shreshtha,

Deputy Director WASH, B&MG Foundation.

PAS platform has supported the growth of data system at city level, enhancing systematisation and digitisation of data. It is now institutionalised at national level as a tool for data management system in the urban services portfolio, integrated with the smart cities and city finance portal. PAS was instrumental in SBM, and the lessons learnt from PAS framework implementation are critical for other initiatives. For the success of CWIS approach, governance is key. The PAS with Governance can be instrumental for achieving /monitoring CWIS at global level.

Governance aspects important in Asian Development Bank's (ADB) lending process.

Norio Saito,
Director, South Asia Urban Development and Water Division at Asian Development Bank (ADB)

ADB's financing beyond core infrastructure development focused at establishing a system that enables sustainable service delivery by focusing on all governance aspects. Physical investment is complemented with Targeted institutional and financial reforms, and capacity building to strengthen own source of revenue generation. Financial sustainability has to move in parallel with service level improvement. Improvement in WASH sector in India needs to be replicated, through sharing of good practices in PAS.

Systems approach or governance approach exercised in context of Ghana by IRC from the local to national level

Vida Duti,
Country Director, IRC, Ghana.

To provide safe equitable and safe WASH services, we need a strong WASH system based on the foundation of good policies, regulations, planning, financing and ability to learn from exercise.

In Ghana there is an agreement with government to support improvement of the WASH systems. Working in partnership with Conrad Hilton Foundation, IRC is providing capacity building at the district level for planning, long term monitoring and galvanising participation of all stakeholders towards the agenda of universal services. Distilled learning from these processes at local level is carried to national level to support the improvement of WASH policies. These are also aligned with national level, and feed into improving WASH policies at the national government level. We go through the cycle of bringing the learning from local and supporting the national process. The success of this process depends on aligning this process with government's own priorities and structure and then keeping government in the driving seat.

Reflections from Panel Discussion

Governance aspect important in regulation of service providers, especially when it comes to mobilising funding

Robert Gakubia,
Ex-Water Services Regulatory Board, Kenya.

There is a very thin line for governance and regulation. Improving conditions and facilitating service delivery and incentivizing sector growth is a part of the regulation mandate. Mandate for utilities is to attract more finance and they must be credit worthy, meaning they must cover not only basic O&M cost but also take care of their other infrastructural investment needs. It is unfortunate that traditional financing continues to flow to dysfunctional water service providers, which is why there is a huge disconnect between expenditure, coverage and financial sustainability. WASH will take time to attract commercial finance, meanwhile it is important that the existing public finance also has value. Good governance will strengthen its effective use.

During the COVID pandemic, both local and national government turned to water utilities as the first line of defense to enhance services. Huge infrastructure development alone cannot address the basic need of the people who are most vulnerable to pandemic. Thus, it is important to balance large infrastructural development with governance aspects of coverage, equity and resilience.

PAS instrumental in supporting Government of India's programme and policy making

Meera Mehta,
Executive Director, CWAS, CEPT University, India.

PAS is used in several states in India and continues to get expanded. It engages all level of government. It is also a robust IT based platform. As it is available in public domain, it is used not only by governments to support policy making and monitoring but also by academia, financing institutions, regulators, etc. Before PAS there were few isolated instance of benchmarking service performance in a few cities, that did not sustain over time.

PAS is further incorporating governance aspects which can be used for variety of purpose such as assessing CWIS, assessing creditworthiness and ESG assessment of cities, estimating water and sanitation SDGs, to support localizing SDGs.

Challenges in implementing WASH Governance Monitoring

Alejandro Jiménez,
WASH Programe Director, SIWI.

Use of data and information system of the governance is an opportunity and a challenge for the cities. The whole point of governance is to improve daily operations of the service providers over time, as governance takes time to make a tangible difference.

A key success factor is to make governance discussion a positive one, to help create an accountability culture. Justifying actions to all stakeholders will better prepare us to improve service delivery.

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Audience Questions and Answers

RESILIENCE IN WASH SERVICE DELIVERY

Q How does an organization like BMGF prepare countries and sub national entities to become inclusive and resilient

- This is an issue of governance and community participation and making people aware of what might happen. This is why transparent data is important to support decision making.
- BMGF supports different governments in similar initiative and partnering with institutions like UNICEF, development banks to work together to bring this data issue in front. This helps to have better awareness at different levels.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN ULB

Q How do you relate to corruption in governance

It is time to look at governance with a positive perspective and try to advance the trust. We have risk assessment and governance indicators. If we stress only about corruption, then we lose almost every body because there is an implication that we are actually dealing with corruption. We should instead focus on improving services and accountability at ULB level.

INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE SERVICE DELIVERY

Q How does lending institutions take into account inclusion

- Inclusion is a key aspect in the projects financed by ADB. Assessment of impact of the project for the poor is always undertaken, and it is ensured that inclusive service delivery aspect is incorporated in the project scope – for example in Citywide Inclusive Sanitation
- Enhance onsite sanitation system so that urban poor can benefit instead of just relying centralized Wastewater management which are expensive and cannot be afforded by all.

Q What is the inclusion dimension in the PAS framework

- PAS includes equity by looking at the service provision in slums separately in addition to overall service delivery in the city.
- PAS has particularly added the dimension of onsite sanitation, as many households, particularly the poorer ones, are dependent on onsite sanitation.

SIMILARITIES IN AGENDA FOR CHANGE PAS GOVERNANCE ASPECTS

Q How is Agenda for Change similar to PAS SIWI framework

- Agenda for Change advocates are developing in partnership a common agenda and working towards achieving it.
- Both the frameworks sustain beyond 'project life' at the utility level and assess how it aligns with government's own performance requirement. By having those aligned the city government or the utility, is motivated to take those remedial actions and to respond to the local situations.

Messages from panellist on social media

Roshan Shreshtha
Deputy Director WASH

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

"All the learnings we got from the PAS exercise was very impressive and we now can see that it has been very well institutionalized. PAS leanings were instrumental in the assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring of other WASH projects"

Vida Duti
Country Director

IRC, Ghana.

"Partners in development need to have a common agenda and such frameworks need to align with the government's own performance goals for sustainability, motivated ownership, and good uptake of the framework"

Robert Gakubia
Ex-Water Services Regulatory Board (Wasreb)
Kenya.

"Outcomes from huge infrastructure development cannot be achieved without focusing on services. I would focus more on equity - a lesson we learned during the pandemic"

Meera Mehta
Executive Director

CWAS, CEPT University, India.

"Before we started PAS exercise in India, a few other benchmarking exercises existed, but none were at scale or sustained for long. Today PAS continues to expand and explore other interesting aspects on ESG, CWIS and also on localizing the SDGs"

Norio Saito
Director, South Asia Urban Development and Water Division
Asian Development Bank

"We cover all aspects of governance that have been included by the PAS Governance framework in all project financing at Asian Development Bank"

Alejandro Jiménez
WASH Programme Director

SIWI.

"Aspects on climate resilience and overall sustainability are important to focus on when we talk about governance"

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Key takeaways

- Universal access to WASH service access to be acknowledged as critical.
- Infrastructure creation is important, but it is equally important to improve service delivery through strong WASH systems.
- There seems to be a positive correlation between the WASH governance index and the WASH services index.
- Finance emerges as a key concern in WASH governance. Without strengthening municipal finance, it would be difficult for city government to improve their governance performance.

Roshan Shreshtha
Deputy Director WASH

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

PAS system as well as the learnings from its implementation are pivotal in implementing other government initiatives. There is a need to replicate PAS at a global level to achieve similar success.

Vida Duti
Country Director

IRC, Ghana.

The success of systems approach or governance depends on the aligning this process at the city /local level with central government's priorities and restructuring policies at national level using the lessons from implementation at local level.

Meera Mehta
Executive Director

CWAS, CEPT University, India.

PAS as an established tool can be strengthened by Governance aspects to help improve and sustain service delivery in cities, to assess ability for commercial funding, and to improve environmental performance.

Alejandro Jiménez
WASH Programme Director

SIWI.

Important to discuss governance as a positive addition for Improvement in service quality, sustenance of improved practises and climate resilience in cities. Adding WASH Governance aspects in monitoring systems is critical..

Robert Gakubia
Ex-Water Services Regulatory Board (Wasreb)
Kenya.

Important to strike a balance between huge infrastructure development and utility performance with respect to coverage and equity, and focus on resilience to strengthen sustainable water services.

Norio Saito
Director, South Asia Urban Development and Water Division
Asian Development Bank

Governance aspects are very important in funding agencies lending process. Financial sustainability has to move in parallel with service level improvements